

DD/A Registry

85-1736

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Subjects for the Director's Consideration

FROM:

Harry E. Fitzwater
Deputy Director for Administration

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

13 May 1985

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S
INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1. Director of Central
Intelligence

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Bill,

I had the Curator,
Historical Intelligence
Collection research heros/
heroines of intelligence during
the American Revolution for a
possible candidate for a
statue. I have attached the
memo to me from [redacted]
for your consideration. If you
would like more research, we
will be happy to look at other
periods of time.

Harry E. Fitzwater

Atts

As stated



DD/A Registry
85-1736

9 May 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Harry E. Fitzwater
Deputy Director for Administration

FROM :
Curator, Historical Intelligence Collection

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SUBJECT : Subjects for the Director's Consideration

1. Attached per your request are brief biographic sketches of three heroes/heroines of intelligence during the American Revolution, for the Director's consideration. They are of Major Benjamin Tallmadge, George Washington's chief of intelligence; Mrs. Patience (Lovell) Wright, an American artist who reported intelligence from London to the Americans during the war; and Elias Boudinot, Commissary of Prisoners for the Continental Army and later President of the Congress, who reported valuable intelligence to Washington throughout the war.

Of the three, Boudinot appears to me to have been the most consistently professional. Some pro's and con's of each are listed below.

2. Major Benjamin Tallmadge:

Pro's: (a) Handled the sensitive "Culpeper" operation in a secure and productive manner.
(b) Was diligent and personally courageous.
(c) Used secret writing (SW) and cover successfully, with some coaching from George Washington.

Con's: (a) Was a military officer, so may not be the most appropriate choice for the civilian C.I.A.
(b) Was occasionally careless: his baggage and some personal papers were captured by the British in 1779, and he also met some of his agents behind enemy lines -- a lapse in professionalism which helped cost Major John Andre his life in the Benedict Arnold operation.
(c) Fell into disfavor with George Washington just before the siege of Yorktown and was something of a "cowboy" according to my predecessor I have not seen the documentation on either of these points, but have great respect for knowledge and judgement.

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STAT

3. Mrs. Patience (Lovell) Wright:

- Pro's: (a) As a female collector of intelligence, she personifies our C.I.A. principle that intelligence is not a gender-related activity.
- (b) She demonstrated qualities needed for and customarily found among C.I.A. personnel = personal courage, ingenuity, and forthright speech.
- (c) Mrs. Wright had top-level access = she was a personal friend of, and frequently met with, King George III and Queen Charlotte, whom in her Quaker way she addressed as "George" and "Charlotte."
- Con's: (a) Relatively few women were notable good intelligence personnel during the Revolution except in their private concerns. Although it was a societal thing at that time, choice of Mrs. Wright could create a false impression.
- (b) Mrs. Wright was not always an accurate reporter, although the inaccuracies appeared to lie with her sources rather than herself.
- (c) Mrs. Wright was atypical as an intelligence collector, but that may be a plus or minus. She certainly seems the most interesting of the three.

4. Elias Boudinot:

- Pro's: (a) Performed important services for his country in addition to his intelligence activities.
- (b) Boudinot was consistently professional.
- (c) In his post-Revolutionary career, Boudinot founded the American Bible Society, demonstrating that religious activities are not incompatible with intelligence activities. This should not need demonstrating, but occasionally does.
- (d) Boudinot financed his intelligence operations from his private funds when official funds were not available, evidencing a high order of belief in mission.
- Con's: (a) No high-profile "con's" noted, although closer scrutiny would doubtless yield a few.

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MAJOR BENJAMIN TALLMADGE

Benjamin Tallmadge was born on Long Island in 1754 and was a classmate of Nathan Hale at Yale, where he graduated in 1773. He joined the Connecticut regiment of Colonel John Chester in the spring of 1776, and participated in the battle of Long Island in August 1776.

Beginning in 1778, Tallmadge managed George Washington's secret intelligence operations in New York and on Long Island, providing high level insights into British military plans and intentions. In the spring of 1779 he began the use of secret writing, utilizing secret inks provided by Sir Peter Jay, brother of John Jay. He served actively as a case officer, meeting his agents behind British lines, and invented a code for communications with them. His initiative in participating in the apprehension of Major John André assisted in the uncovering of the treason of Benedict Arnold. Tallmadge was the case officer for the famous "Culper" net. He was occasionally careless, but lost no agents as a result.

Tallmadge was active in intelligence until 1782, collecting military intelligence on Long Island, and naval intelligence to assist the Count de Rochambeau, commander of the French Army in America.

Tallmadge died in March 1835, at the age of 81. An engraving of Tallmadge exists, in Revolutionary war uniform. He has been described as of above average height, well proportioned, and military in bearing.

- References:
- (1) Charles Swain Hall. "Benjamin Tallmadge, Revolutionary soldier and American businessman"
 - (2) Mark M. Boatner III, "Encyclopedia of The American Revolution"

PATIENCE WRIGHT

Patience (Lovell) Wright was born in New York in 1725, and was raised as a Quaker by her family in Western New Jersey. In 1748 she married Joseph Wright, a West Jersey neighbor. She became progressively active in making wax sculptures in Pennsylvania, and in 1772 sailed for London.

Mrs Wright was an immediate success in London, doing wax busts of King George III, Queen Charlotte, and the Prime Minister Lord North, among others. The King and Queen took a special liking to her, and saw her frequently.

Through her many contacts at high levels of English society and the Royal court, and some skill in elicitation, Mrs. Wright was privy to a wealth of useful information -- both good intelligence and bits of gossip, occasionally inaccurate. She reported her intelligence to the Earl of Chatham (as a friend of America), to correspondents in America, and to Benjamin Franklin in Paris. She received a grateful acknowledgement from George Washington.

Mrs. Wright died in London in February 1786.

At least two likenesses of Mrs. Wright have survived.

Reference: Charles Coleman Seller, "Patience Wright"

ELIAS BOUDINOT

Elias Boudinot was born in Philadelphia on May 2, 1740. He practiced law in New Jersey, and became a member of the Revolutionary Committee of Safety for Essex County, New Jersey, in 1774. In 1775 Boudinot was instrumental in sending badly needed supplies of gunpowder to George Washington at Boston. In 1776, as a member of the Provincial Congress of New Jersey, he aided in the deposition of the last Royal Governor (William Franklin) and joined the army as aide to General William Livingston.

In 1777 Boudinot was appointed by George Washington to be Commissary of Prisoners, an integral part of the job being the collection of intelligence. Although Boudinot left his job as Commisary in 1778 for a seat in the Continental Congress, he continued to be active in clandestine intelligence collection, reporting to George Washington directly. Boudinot utilized his private funds for intelligence collection when official funds were lacking. In 1779 Boudinot was using field cryptonyms and secret writing for his agents, one of whom, although unidentified, was obviously both important and had access to high-level intelligence. Boudinot was still active as late as 1782, reporting intelligence on Indian activities.

Boudinot was elected President of the Congress of the United States in 1783, served for ten years as Director of the U.S. Mint, and founded the American Bible Society. He died in 1821.

There are several portraits of Boudinot extant.

- References:
- (1) Barbara Louise Clark, "E.B., The Story of Elias Boudinot IV, his Family, his Friends, and his Country."
 - (2) "The Writings of George Washington" (1931 edition), volumes 11, 12, 14, 15 and 25.